Schoolscapes

The Education Reform Newsletter
A publication of the Ministère de l'Éducation

Volume 4, Number 2
March 2002

Conference on Citizenship Education

Montréal, November 20 and 21, 2001

Conference organizer for the Ministère de l'Éducation

Conference organizer for the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration

Learning to live together in the common space of the school in order to live better together in society—this was the theme of the conference organized jointly by the Ministère de l'Éducation and the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration. The purpose of the conference was to look at how our schools, in partnership with community organizations, are preparing young people to take part in democratic life with an openness to the world and to diversity.

Half of the 56 workshops at the conference presented projects that already exist in the schools. In many cases, students took part in presenting the projects with their teachers. The other workshops focused on the concept of citizenship, the contribution of the Québec Education Program to citizenship education and experiments with citizenship education carried out by community organizations. Groups from the French and Belgian communities also came to share their experience. Round tables of academics and representatives of student organizations shared their views and examined our current ways of living together. Students in teacher training at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) provided support for the organizing committee and ran two workshops on aspects of their training related to the school's mission to foster social development.

The conference was aimed at elementary and secondary school teams and members of governing boards—parents, students and representatives of socioeconomic groups. Community groups that are partners with schools were also invited. Nearly 150 elementary and secondary school students participated in the event as members of their student councils or governing boards or as copresenters of workshops, with their teachers.

Originally planned for 500 participants, the conference hosted 800, the maximum number of people the premises could hold. The organizing committee received more than 1400 applications for registration—telling evidence of educators' interest in citizenship education.

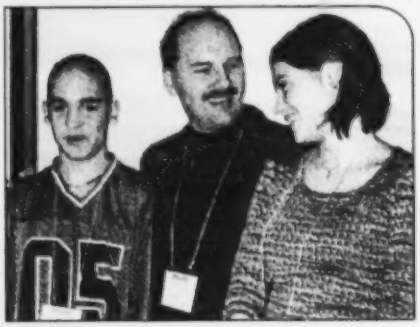
The mission of Québec schools is to impart knowledge to students, foster their social development and give them qualifications in order that they may meet the challenges of the 21st century and take part in building the society in which they will live. The conference demonstrated how the Québec Education Program may be used for this purpose and stressed the importance of partnership in building a society that is open to the world and to diversity.

The Québec Education Program contains a number of broad areas of learning, areas of cross-curricular exploration and study that are related to students' life experience as concerns their career choices, their autonomy in dealing with pervasive media messages and advertising, and their process of gradually assuming responsibility for their health. But in focusing on citizenship and community life, this conference placed special emphasis on the need for students to learn about civic and political involvement. The educational intention of this area is to encourage students to take part in the democratic life of their class and school in a spirit of openness to the world and to diversity. In addition to fostering the development of appropriate attitudes and behaviours, the Québec Education Program has to provide a solid basic education. For this reason, several workshops stressed how essential the subject areas are to the basic education of future citizens.

In this issue of Schoolscapes, we share with you some of the high points of the first Conference on Citizenship Education. We hope you enjoy them.

A Unique Path

Jean-Denis Guignard



Seventeen 12- to 16-year-olds from the Polyvalente de la Pocatière were awestruck as they entered the VIP suite of the Delta Hotel one by one to participate and share their vision of the world at the Conference on Citizenship Education, which was held in Montréal on November 21. These youth, who were enrolled in the Continuous Individualized Paths for Learning Program, were presenting a workshop about their initiation into democratic life in their community, with the collaboration of the La Pocatière city council, in response to an initiative of their teacher, Jean-Denis Guignard.

Funding received from the La Pocatière city council and the Fonds jeunesse Québec enabled them to share their wonderful experience with participants.

These young people presented their workshop with conviction, and their participation allowed us to confirm several trends. To explain the choice of the cycle team, to which Mr. Guignard belongs, the experience of these young people at risk was based on the focuses of development found in the broad areas of learning of the Québec Education Program. According to Jean-Denis Guignard, he and his colleagues were pleased to discover that the approach taken in the Québec Education Program currently used at the elementary level specifically targets these youth. According to Guignard, the new program mentions and confirms the appropriateness of the concrete actions taken over the past few years in their schools. Competencies in each subject area are also addressed, since the program explores new avenues in what he calls the "drawer" of general education.

For this teacher and his students, the goal of their presentation at the workshop was to explain how community life and citizenship were put into practice in their classes, a goal which they achieved with flying colours. As we chatted with them, we discovered a variety of broad areas of learning that make up the core of his students' learnings. Mr. Guignard accurately summed up the situation thus: "these young people are not on a storage track or in a pull-off lane, but on a path where we actualize their potential and encourage them to take up

(cont. on page 2)

2007-03542/

A Unique Path (cont from page 1)

challenges and to excel. We have to teach them to be good citizens." These are very encouraging remarks for the school.

Projects

However, in real life, how does it work? Students consolidate knowledge they acquire in subjects and develop their cross-curricular competencies in concrete learning situations connected with community services. Two main projects, Récupér-Action and domestic composting at school, illustrate the connections among the broad areas of learning, including Personal and Career Planning, Environmental Awareness, Consumer Rights and Responsibilities, Health and Well-Being, and Media Literacy.

The Récupér-Action project helps students to become aware of their potential, talents and personal and career aspirations. When you listen to Mr. Guignard speak, you can easily imagine the scope of the educational aim of Personal and Career Planning: "To enable students to undertake and complete projects that develop their potential and help them integrate into society".

An excellent example is Tommy, a 15-year-old student, present during our meeting with the group, who is in charge of recycling computer parts. Environmental, instructional and technological concerns were taken into consideration. From recovering computer and electronic equipment to recycling or safely disposing of it, this project allows students to interact with numerous school, community and municipal workers and with various individuals from private businesses. If you ask Tommy what he thinks about his contribution over the past three years, he will confidently tell you that he is most proud of his recycling role. He told us that, at the beginning, he had his doubts about the usefulness of the project, but over the past three years, his environmental awareness has increased. He has also developed organization skills from his work, and a sense of responsibility for new students who join the program.

Another project participant is Jacinthe, a 15-year-old student who, along with other students, is responsible for domestic composting at school. She also helps develop responsible strategies for the consumption and use of goods and services in the community, and she shares her knowledge and responsibilities with others who join the project. She is especially proud of the fact that she has developed people skills. She says that she is more comfortable dealing with people, which was not the case only three years ago. Last year, she had a composting stand where she gave advice about recycling, not only to students from the school, but also to adults who were taking courses.

As his comments and work with young people clearly demonstrate, Jean-Denis Guignard is an enthusiastic individual. One of his project's winning conditions is the size of his group, which makes it easier to work with. But he also realizes how important the contribution of his students is. Community life has to be experienced—not just theorized about—and it has to leave its mark. And there are many signs of success, such as the visits of "the regulars," as he calls them, who come to pick up recycled computer parts or to seek advice on composting. Another strong point is the fundraising activities of the Fabrico workshop, whose products are greatly appreciated. However, what you notice the most when you meet the group is the great respect that these young people show for him, young people who face difficult, but not insurmountable challenges. As Tommy says, "He's a good guy."

From Gaspésie to Kosovo:

Students Correspond with Canadian Peacekeeper

It is one thing to read about conflict and its humanitarian repercussions in the newspapers; it is quite another to communicate on a regular basis with someone who is actually there. In 1999-2000, students at Ecole primaire de Nouvelle in Gaspésie learned more than one life lesson from a very unique pen-pal: a Canadian helicopter pilot who was part of the peacekeeping mission in Kosovo.

It all began in religious education class when Rose-Eva Landry, a Grade 3 teacher, asked her students to

reflect on how each person has a part to play in helping to maintain peace in the world, beginning within his or her family, school and community. The class began talking about how some people go to war-torn countries to help maintain peace, and how this means being away from their families for long periods of time, even during Christmas.

When Landry told them about Stéphane Roux, a helicopter pilot she knew who was on a peacekeeping mission with the Canadian Forces in Kosovo, the children suggested writing Christmas cards to him and his colleagues. The project soon extended to the entire class and developed into a steady correspondence; it was the beginning of not only a new relationship, but an awakening to the real-life suffering and poverty so prevalent in many parts of the world.

Sarra Khoudfa and Simon Gallant, now in Grade 5, were two of the students who participated in the project. They say it opened their eyes to a whole other world—one where children their own age don't have enough to eat, don't have proper clothes to keep warm in winter, or don't go to school because they have no way of getting there. "My parents used to tell me that some children don't have enough to eat, but I didn't believe them," said Simon. "Here, we have everything."

The project also changed the students' perception of the military. "Before, I thought the army was just for war," said Sarra. "Now I know they have missions for peace, too. I also learned about international organizations that help other countries, such as the United Nations and UNESCO."

Roux is an aircraft commander with the 430 Tactical Helicopter Squadron, based at the Canadian Forces Base in Valcartier, Quebec. His squadron was part of Operation Kinetic, Canada's contribution to the NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo and FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). Their job was to support the ground army, but also to help rebuild villages, schools, medical facilities and bridges, and provide humanitarian assistance. Roux was particularly involved in helping families and children, and in transporting the sick.

Students would send letters to Roux by e-mail, asking him all kinds of questions: about his mission, the helicopter he flew, the climate in Kosovo, and especially, the children and families who lived there. He would reply as often as he could, taking care to answer each student's questions; he also sent them pictures. He told them about his duties, about life in Kosovo and the hardships the people faced; once, he told them about a boy who had never seen any other children because he and his parents were living in the mountains and had no means of transportation.

Overwhelming curiosity

Roux found the experience of corresponding with the children extremely enriching. He said he was surprised by their overwhelming curiosity and their very specific questions. "I never thought kids that age would be so interested in what I was doing and experiencing in Kosovo," said Roux, himself the father of two very young children. "Every answer generated even more questions."

He was extremely touched by the children's letters. "It helped break the isolation," he said. "You're really far from everything, out in the middle of nowhere." Roux shared the letters with his colleagues, and some of them wrote back to the students as well.

In addition to writing and receiving letters, every Monday morning the students would listen to the recorded message on the Canadian Forces' toll-free phone line. The service is intended primarily for the families of service people stationed abroad, but it is open to the public as well. A recorded message, prepared by the service people themselves, provides information on the latest developments in their area, bits of news, or special messages to their families. (When they began the project, Roux was in charge of recording the messages for his group.)

In her classroom, Rose-Eva Landry incorporated the project into the daily routine, using it to develop a number of cross-curricular competencies, as well as subject-specific competencies in French, visual arts and science and technology. Students did research on the conflict, followed developments in the newspapers and on television, and had class discussions on different topics.

The project achieved several pedagogical aims, such as helping to enrich students' worldview in terms of peace, violence, life, death, wealth, poverty and suffering, and understanding real-life problems and searching for solutions. "I can tell them about Kosovo, but it's quite another story to have someone living there answer their questions directly," said Landry. "The students' motivation just kept growing."

Although only one class was officially involved in the project, the interest and enthusiasm spread to the entire school. So when Roux was back home and told Landry that he and his colleagues could come for a visit, they planned the event to coincide with the first day back to school in August 2000—helicopters and all!

Impact on the Community

Parents were heavily involved in the project as well, helping children follow news programs at home, lending audiovisual and computer equipment (at the beginning, the class did not have Internet access; Simon acted as messenger and his mother sent the messages from her computer), and helping with safety and security during the helicopter visit.

Indeed, the project has had a significant impact on the community as a whole. Many students have begun peace projects. The community's view of the army has changed; children and adults alike now recognize its peacekeeping and humanitarian role. The project has also resulted in increased interest and collaboration in school projects on the part of parents and the local community.

As an educator, Landry found the experience very rewarding. "It was an opportunity for all of us to better understand how we—as children, parents, educators, citizens or service people—can build peace, and how we can apply these learnings in everyday life to become better citizens."

Teacher Training and Citizenship Education

Universities have already begun adjusting their teacher training programs to integrate the concept of citizenship education. In some cases it is a matter of developing new courses and modifying current paths; in others, it is simply a matter of giving more emphasis to elements already contained in the programs; in yet others, it is an opportunity to reexamine their overall approach.

A panel of professors from three different universities painted portraits of the changes underway at their respective institutions.

New courses

Luc Guay is an associate professor and instructional designer in history at the Université de Sherbrooke. For the past three years, the university has been working to revamp its Bachelor of Education program for secondary education in order to make it more dynamic. Citizenship education is one of the questions they have been examining.

The path they will propose will be called History and Citizenship Education. (Although with the reform, citizenship education is to be present in all subjects, it takes on particular importance and is formalized in history, Guay explained.) Four courses are planned: Espace démocratique québécois et canadien (democratic space in Québec and Canada), Institutions et organisations internationales (international institutions and organizations), Une société pluraliste (a pluralistic society), and Histoire des idées politiques (history of political thought).

In these courses, students will approach the question of citizenship education from various angles: the development of rights; the citizen as an active person who votes and contributes to society, who is a consumer, but who can also be delinquent; pressure groups and social movements; the interdependency of peoples and the issue of globalization; the development of diversity, the contribution and influence of immigrant citizens; political institutions from Plato to Marx; the notions of the individual and of the community; the legitimacy of different political systems.

"But we don't want to develop only factual knowledge," said Guay. "We also want to develop intellectual abilities." How? Through debates and the confrontation of ideas, by using questions such as the obtention of women's right to vote in the 1940s; through simulations of the UN security council, with issues such as refugee rights; through investigative journalism, for example, a study of the various ethnic restaurants in Montreal. As well, each year the department organizes a study trip to a historical site. Past locations have included Greece, Italy, England, Spain and Turkey; next year, the class will visit Egypt.

The university also has several programs that specialize in citizenship education. For example, at the graduate level, it offers a "micro-program" dealing with citizenship education. It also has a graduate diploma that includes a component on citizenship education, and a Master's in history with a large component on citizenship education. "We are aiming to align all our programs with what is happening at the elementary, secondary and college levels," said Guay.

Making elements more explicit

Christian Laville is a professor in the department of teaching and learning studies, faculty of education, at Université Laval. He and his colleagues welcome the new requirement to integrate citizenship education into history because they had been opposed to the approach previously required by the Ministère de l'Éducation. "This new approach more closely matches our own views."

Most of the new elements already exist in their programs, but are not always emphasized or as visible as they should be. "A large part of our efforts will therefore consist in transforming our programs so that these elements are more explicit."

Specifically, the Bachelor of Education program for secondary teachers in history will consist of 45 history credits, with a common core of 30 credits. The remaining 15 credits will depend on the student's choice of path, either history and geography, or history and moral and religious studies. "In all the history courses, the teacher will be required to devote particular attention to making the virtual content relating to citizenship education more explicit," said Laville. "Our teachers are aware of this and have agreed to it."

In addition, two new courses dealing specifically with citizenship education are planned: Histoire à travers le temps et à travers le monde (history through time and throughout the world), and Histoire et citoyenneté (history and citizenship). Psycho-pedagogical and didactic courses will also be modified to emphasize components relating to citizenship education.

A transdisciplinary viewpoint

Gérald Boutin is a professor and director of the Bureau de la formation pratique (office in charge of workplace training) at the Université du Québec à Montréal. Citizenship education is not entirely new to his colleagues either. In fact, he said, UQAM has a long tradition in this area, having hosted several conferences and workshops on the topic in the 1980s.

Like other universities, said Boutin, UQAM is aligning its orientations with the work of UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation and briefs on the subject. Many aspects of citizenship education are already present in its programs. However, the university is also in the process of modifying several of its courses. Given its location and population, it has started with courses relating to multiethnicity.

Boutin approached the topic of integrating education citizenship into teacher training from a more global perspective, describing three axes on which he and his colleagues are focusing. First, they are examining the very meaning of the expression "citizenship education," to reach a consensus and a common vision. In particular, they are concerned with the issues of rights and responsibilities, democracy, civic participation, and the individual's relationship to others.

They are also aiming to incorporate citizenship education into the foundations of all their programs. "There is no point in offering a panoply of closed courses on such complex notions. We must go even further and work across the disciplines," said Boutin. "We must ask, how does one position oneself from the perspective of the other disciplines?" It is important that future teachers be aware of changes in the past and present, he said, and reflect on the role teachers will be called upon to play in the future.

A third central element is the connection with the practical context, "an openness to everyday life, to real life," said Boutin. This includes giving more importance to freedom of speech, by inviting students to express themselves. "It is important not only to have a point of view, but to be able to express it." It also involves taking into account the prior knowledge of students, the learning conditions at the university, and the realities of the job market; working in collaboration with the school system; encouraging greater cooperation both within the university and with outside partners; and reexamining our own perceptions and world views.

Living and Building Together

The Conference on Citizenship Education was an opportunity for people from a variety of backgrounds to come together to share their reflections on issues relating to citizenship education. The conference focused on the theme, "Learning to live together in the common space of the school, in order to live in greater harmony as a society." This is the challenge to be met by the school system in conjunction with the community, said Robert Bisaillon, assistant deputy minister for preschool, elementary and secondary education.

Mr. Bisaillon addressed conference participants gathered for lunch in the main hall. The room was packed with students, teachers, administrators, parents and community partners attending the event, which was so popular that organizers, to their dismay, were forced to turn away some 500 registration requests.

Learning communities

"Education literature talks a lot about the value of learning communities and the need for schools to become learning communities as well," Mr. Bisaillon began. The Conference on Citizenship Education is yet another step in this direction.

"In the learning communities that we are to create, no one will have a monopoly on truth," he said. Rather, building a learning community is a process in which all members search for answers together, ask questions, take the time to listen to each other and to express their viewpoints, to check the accuracy of facts, to weigh the pros and cons, to share their experiences, to debate issues and to find common solutions to the challenges they face.

"This process enhances our common understanding of people, events and phenomena, because we have worked together; making sure that each person's contribution adds to this understanding," he explained. "In this way, we learn to adapt to new and increasingly complex situations, as we develop greater capacities which become are themselves transferable to other circumstances."

To achieve this goal, communities—whether they be a student council, a council of ministers, a class or a work group—must adopt certain attitudes. These include having confidence in themselves and in others, using rigorous procedures, being persistent, having respect for differences and developing the capacity to withstand shocks so that they are able to overcome obstacles and difficulties.

According to Mr. Bisaillon, this conference is therefore an ideal opportunity to work together to find ways to build an environment and a world where everyone has enough to eat, can live safely and securely, and can learn to read, write and express themselves so as to participate in society's debates and use their judgment to understand issues. It allows us to make a commitment to embrace diversity with an open mind and an open heart and with the conviction that all human beings must have equal rights. It is a chance to participate democratically in the decisions that will shape our society, and to find ethical and political answers that respect human dignity.

"The fact that so many school teams are in attendance is highly encouraging because the success of citizenship education is fostered and achieved in each school as each community becomes convinced of the strength of its own resources and its ability to exceed its own limitations," said the assistant deputy minister. Obviously, institutions have to work within a framework of rules and standards, but there is already enough latitude and room to allow different schools to build or set up their own community and to continually broaden the opportunity for initiative.

One merely has to speak to some of the teachers giving presentations or leading workshops at this conference to realize that several projects have necessitated all kinds of changes in school organization so as to provide greater leeway for collective freedom. "Sometimes we had to have firm discussions with our colleagues on the pros and cons of a proposed approach and its impact on the quality of learning, the school climate, student supervision, evaluation and even the distribution of tasks. Slowly, we were able to convince other staff members," said Mr. Bisaillon. "This experience has taught us some invaluable lessons. However, rights, autonomy and freedom are not handed down automatically and for all time. On the contrary, they must continually be reasserted."

The experiences of various schools provide examples of organizations that are learning to adapt, of organizations that are defining what they are capable of doing and that, in some cases, are upsetting the status quo. But they have succeeded in

(Continued on page 7)

Workshop 1:

The Québec Education Program and Citizenship Education

What parts of the Québec Education Program (QEP) are concerned with citizenship and citizenship education? Many people think the answer is the broad area of learning Citizenship and Community Life, and Chapter 7, Geography, History and Citizenship Education. Nicole Gagnon and Marius Langlois, of the Direction de la formation générale des jeunes of the Ministère de l'Éducation, set out to show participants in Workshop 1 of the Conference on Citizenship Education that many parts of the QEP address issues related to citizenship or provide opportunities for citizenship education.

Gagnon, the developer of Chapter 2 (the former "Program of Programs") in the Québec Education Program, began by recalling that the school's threefold mission as set out in the Education Act reflects a considerable preoccupation with the making of good citizens. The first element of the mission, to impart knowledge, by stressing the importance of cognitive development and not just book learning, identifies a factor essential for active, critical involvement; the second, to foster social development, focuses directly on citizenship education; and the third, to give qualifications, reminds us that social and occupational integration are conditions of full citizenship.

Gagnon then called on participants to suggest characteristics of 21st-century citizens. "Open," they suggested, and "tolerant, aware of their rights and responsibilities, responsible, taking stands, paying their taxes, involved, versatile, familiar with their political environment." In response to a participant who objected that these are just ideals and that in reality, the tendency is towards self-preoccupation and careerism, Gagnon pointed out that the QEP provides a context for examining our society's obsession with competition and the increasingly unequal distribution of financial resources, and above all, that it is precisely because the 21st-century world is so complex and challenging that we have to prepare young people to play an active role in it.

Using knowledge with autonomy and dexterity

This allowed her to segue into the heart of her subject—the role of the QEP in this process. The QEP is essentially a frame of reference, and what it "is" depends on what teachers make of it. But it identifies essential learnings for the 21st century and contains tools designed to help teachers prepare their students for the challenges they will face. First of all, to handle the complexity and changeability of the present environment, students need competencies. The QEP's emphasis on cross-curricular competencies is right on the mark. Why? Because they are transferable, which means they equip young people to deal with situations that are new to them. There is no need to worry about students acquiring competencies at the expense of knowledge, for while it is possible to be learned without being competent, the reverse is impossible. The purpose of cross-curricular competencies is to ensure that students can use their knowledge with the autonomy and dexterity that the times require.

Some cross-curricular competencies are, of course, more directly relevant than others to citizenship issues, but they are all about having a good head on one's shoulders, rather than a head crammed with facts. Gagnon stressed that we have to develop in young people the ability to act like search engines, locating, evaluating and using information. This ability corresponds to the intellectual and methodological competencies (Competencies 1 to 6) in the QEP.

The personal and social competencies also comprise essential building blocks of citizenship. Thus, in constructing their identity (Competency 7), students learn to be open to their surroundings and to become aware of their place among others.

Competency 8, To cooperate with others, has direct relevance to citizenship education, as students learn to interact with an open mind, to contribute to team efforts, and so on. Competency 9, To communicate appropriately, is a condition for active participation in democratic life.

Opening schools up to the world

To open schools up to the world, the QEP has included five broad areas of learning: Health and Well-Being, Personal and Career Planning, Environmental Awareness

(cont. on page 4)

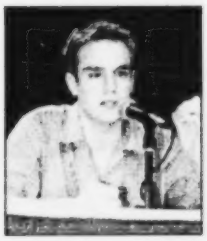
Personal accounts by students from École secondaire Saint-Luc

Living Together

"Living together is the common spirit of the school," the theme of the Conference on Citizenship Education, could be the slogan of the students at École secondaire Saint-Luc in Montréal. There, at noon, one can hear them talking about their experiences of cultural diversity and about what citizenship means to them.

Ranita Namdeo, who was born in Trinidad and Tobago and is of Indian origin, came to Canada when she was five. "The biggest difficulties I had were with language and with the different way of life," she says. She certainly managed to overcome these difficulties, because today she is Minister of Sports and Recreation on the student council and the first girl to hold the position of head monitor at École secondaire Saint-Luc.

Her colleague, the Minister of Communications, Firouz Nikpour-Naini, is from Iran and has lived in Québec for 12 years. "When I started school, I was in the welcoming class to learn French. At the beginning it was very hard because I couldn't communicate with people and I couldn't understand their culture. That was the hardest thing I experienced in my life. But the cultural activities the school organized helped a lot, and little by little I learned to live with people from all over the world. At École Saint-Luc, we learn tolerance, understanding and patience when confronting obstacles, and I have a lot of respect for the teachers and school staff who work every day to eliminate racism and discrimination."



The Prime Minister of the student council is Jean-Michel Hayes. Born in Germany to French-speaking parents, he spent most of his early life in Nova Scotia and came to Québec in 1990. He understood French but didn't speak it. "When I came to École Saint-Luc, I was encouraged to be a model citizen. I learned to relate to others and to work hard to achieve my goals. I hope the participants in this conference realize that they have a very big task to accomplish, because citizenship education is very important for our future, for all of us."

How tolerant are young people?

Do young people have racist and intolerant attitudes? Researchers from the Université de Sherbrooke seek the answer to this question around the world.

During preparations for the World Conference Against Racism held in South Africa last summer, UN officials reflected on the fact that there were few tools to measure and compare the attitudes of young people around the world on this issue. The general impression was that racism and acts of intolerance were on the decline, but there was no international study to prove this. Backed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the United Nations in Geneva, the Université de Sherbrooke research group on racism (GGRIUS—Groupe de recherche sur le racisme de l'Université de Sherbrooke) therefore decided to undertake such a project.

Headed by Pierre Binette and Jean-Herman Guay, the GRRUS embarked on a colossal study. The objective was to deliver a questionnaire to at least 30 000 young people from age 12 to 15, in at least 30 countries. "So far, we've reached more than 15 000 young people," said Binette. The set of 22 questions (available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian) surveys young people on their environment, their values, their beliefs and their behaviour with regard to religion, skin colour and language.

By the summer of 2001, a first progress report was drafted based on an initial group of 1172 respondents. They came from eight countries, spoke 40 different languages and belonged to more than 20 religions or religious movements. While still preliminary, the report reveals some surprising results about intolerance among young people.

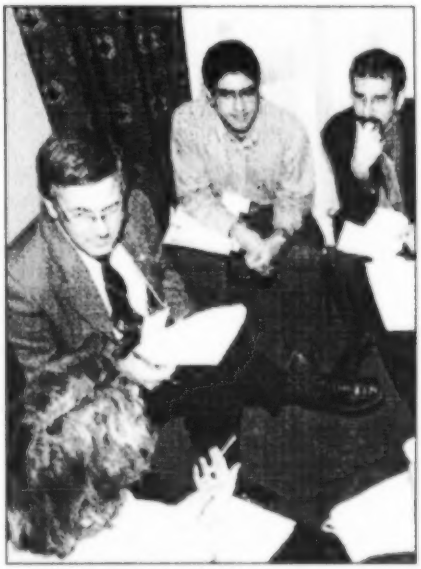
Deep-rooted attitudes

A preliminary analysis enabled the researchers to identify current facets of this issue. To the question, "In your school, would you prefer that all students be of the same colour? Of the same religion? Of the same mother tongue?", nearly one quarter of respondents said they would prefer to live in a more homogenous environment, where their classmates shared the same characteristics as them.

As to whether they would accept that a person of another colour, religion or mother tongue become part of their circle of friends, 21% said no. Even more troubling, 23% of young people admitted to having treated someone unfairly because he or she was different.

Action Research for Community Problem Solving

Since 1993, under the leadership of sixth-grade teacher Claude Poirier, l'école Saint-Gabriel-Archange in Cap-de-la-Madeleine has been using a technique called Action Research for Community Problem Solving (ARCPS). The technique was developed in Ann Arbor, Michigan by environmental educator William Stapp; Poudrier encountered it while doing a Master's in Environmental Science at UQAM. With him at the workshop were Hélène Lapointe, of the school's governing board, who—like Poudrier himself—is also the parent of a student who has participated in an ARCPS project, and two students who have participated in recent action projects; Marie-Joelle Gagnon-Masse and Lisa-Marie Bistodeau.



More than just nature

The technique has 13 steps. The first step is performed by the teacher, who, working with the school team, parents, and community members, does some planning before a project begins. Next, the teacher observes the students and how they go about exploring their environment, and tries to evaluate what skills they will need to develop during the project (both in terms of their needs and those of the project). The subsequent steps are carried out by the students. They begin by looking around them and enumerating all the problems they perceive. As Marie-Joelle said: "the first thing we learned was that the environment isn't just nature; it's everything around us." They choose a problem, taking into account their interests, their resources, the importance of the problem and so on. In the case of the students present, three problems initially came to their attention: at school, pieces of a fence stuck out, creating a safety hazard, while at a nearby park there was a great deal of graffiti, some of it personally insulting or invasive, and there were also many cars around the park, which made crossing dangerous. The students thought that there were perhaps not enough parking spots. In another year, a class noticed that there were a large number of elderly people in the neighbourhood, who needed visits. Still another project sought to reduce the amount of drinking water the people at school wasted every day.

Next, participants research the situation, seeking information from the community. With respect to the cars around the park, the students obtained a report from the police on accidents near the park, and decided that the situation was not really problematic. The following step is to hypothesize a solution to the problem chosen, and to establish evaluation criteria concerning the solution's feasibility (money, time, danger, potential for success, etc.).

After this, the participants formulate an action plan and seek any materials they require. The class whose experience was described at the workshop did ask their parents for help with this, but parents were not the only source of material support. They also wrote a letter to the director of material resources at the school board, and obtained paint from him. Classes have sometimes organized financing campaigns in the past.

The next step is to carry out the project. The students in question fixed the fence and cleaned and painted over the graffiti. Finally, the participants evaluate their project—the procedure adopted, its application and the results.

Fortunately, we can take heart in the fact that three quarters of young people interviewed seemed to be tolerant and open. However, this acceptance is in some cases qualified by a desire for assimilation. In fact, a total of 44% of respondents said they agreed completely or a little with the following statement: "People of another colour, of another religion or of another mother tongue than my own should adjust to my way of living."

Surprising factors

In examining the relationship between the attitudes expressed by these young people and their own characteristics or those of their environment, the researchers identified two primary factors that appeared to influence their opinions and behaviours.

The first factor was the sex of the respondent. In almost all the questions, girls systematically showed greater tolerance than boys. They were less opposed to differences in a proportion of 78%, compared to 71% of boys; only 17% of girls said they had treated someone unfairly because he or she was different, versus 29% among boys.

The second factor was their experience with diversity. The attitudes and behaviour of the young people varied according to the environment in which they lived (some live in very homogeneous environments, while others live on a daily basis with people who are very different from them, the majority lie somewhere between these two extremes). For example, 53% of young people without any experience of diversity expressed a desire for assimilation; yet this number drops to 46% among those who have been slightly exposed to diversity, to 40% among those who have been moderately exposed to diversity and to 37% among young people accustomed to living in a very diverse environment.

But in terms of the desire to live in a more homogeneous environment, the acceptance of different people around them and the propensity to commit acts of injustice, a different picture emerges. Young people living in a homogenous environment show very little intolerance. Yet the proportion of intolerant attitudes and behaviour climbs among those somewhat exposed to diversity, and edges slightly upward among those who have been moderately exposed to diversity. It then falls to its lowest level among young people living in a very diverse environment. Discriminatory attitudes and behaviour therefore tend to increase when differences begin to appear in an environment, and then diminish once the multicultural nature of that environment is fully established.

There is still an enormous amount of work to be done in order to collect and analyze the data and draw conclusions from the survey. However, this study promises to provide some valuable insights into the attitudes and behaviours of the world's future generation. GRRUS is still looking for schools interested in participating in the study. The group can be reached by phone at (819) 821-8000, ext. 2249, or by e-mail at grrus@mail.com.

Empowering

The action research projects have wide support among adults in the schools and in the community, and among the young participants. The school principal observed that the problems the students identify don't just concern them or the school, but society. Just by looking around them for potential problems, they become more aware of and involved in their environment than they would normally be. Hélène Lapointe, of the school's governing board, the students present and some of the student participants in previous action projects (described in a video) stressed how empowering it is for the students and even for the school to be directly involved in the community and to realize that they "and not just adults" can have an impact. Lapointe also noted that sometimes the things the students identify as problems oblige the adults around them to reexamine their own priorities—such as when the students visited lonely elderly people living near the school. Finally, the fact of participating in a project, or of knowing someone who did gives both students and community members (some of whom are former participants) a continuing, direct sense of investment in the issue targeted by the project ("my brother's best friend planted that tree...").

David and Goliath?

One early project that had a major and lasting impact concerned a corporate bad neighbour. The Reynolds Aluminum company's yard, located right near the school, was an eyesore. Worse, the plant's processing techniques produced a disagreeable smell and both the plant itself and its trucks were noisy. Two schools—l'école Saint-Gabriel-Archange, and l'Assomption, a secondary school, were involved in this major project to improve the environment, not only of students and school staff, but also of the residents of the neighbourhood around the plant. Some students wrote to the company directors, explaining the need for action, and Poudrier and the students met with the company directors. Eventually, their efforts met with success. The plant managers changed their technique to eliminate the smells and reduce the noise, and cleaned and landscaped their yard. They have now become active supporters of ARCPS; indeed, the company, which has since become Corus, donated the attractive folder in which material explaining the action research projects was presented to workshop participants.

A powerful learning tool

Although ARCPS is emotionally involving, it does not take up much time—Lisa-Marie and Marie-Joelle estimated about an hour and a half per week—and it is a powerful learning tool. It involves all the cross-curricular competencies. In addition, by keeping a log-book, the students become aware of—and can thus reapply—mathematics and social sciences and linguistic competencies developed in connection with specific projects. Evaluation remains a grey area. Poudrier mentioned that the school is receiving help with regard to evaluation from the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and Université Laval.

The technique can also be used with different age groups and in different contexts. Poudrier has been to Chile and Israel to discuss its potential application in those countries, and he described briefly its use here with young offenders. As presented in the workshop, it seems especially suitable for a small environment where everyone at least vaguely knows everyone else. But even in a big city, schools exist in neighbourhoods, and at the neighbourhood level it should be possible to choose a feasible project that will have an impact.

The Code of Conduct: An Introduction to Democratic Life

A favourable institutional framework

According to Mona Leblanc, the author of the resource book, *l'Éducation à la citoyenneté dans la vie scolaire au primaire*, the code of conduct plays a key role in citizenship education because it provides a favourable institutional framework. On the one hand, students learn that to live together in society, we need rules, and on the other hand, by participating in the development and management of the code of conduct at their school, they get hands-on experience of democratic life based on the principles of equal rights for all, solidarity, the effort to resolve conflicts peacefully, and active, responsible participation by all.

Leblanc also explained that each school formulates the code of conduct according to the values that it wants to promote and the competencies it seeks to develop in its students. If the existing code no longer corresponds to the school staff's ideas, or if there has been a major change in the student population, the code of conduct will need changing. There is a tension between the aims presented here. One aim is to provide a framework for citizenship education; it is conducive to the achievement of this aim to have the students participate actively in the development of the code of conduct, and Leblanc says they do. But she also says the school has to establish the values and competencies to be developed. The achievement of this aim would seem to require that the various adults (staff, governing board) decide on these aspects of the code of conduct on the students' behalf. In this case, the students' role in the development of the code is limited. Their participation in democratic life consists primarily in applying received rules. This is not without value: it is a way to learn what the rules are and how they operate, and there is room for the exercise of judgment, as the students still have to decide which rules apply in a given situation and how they should be applied. Still, it is not a fully democratic situation.

A further limitation is temporal. If in general the code of conduct is only revised when the adults' thinking has evolved or the student population has changed greatly, then certain cohorts of students are excluded from the development process because no development or revision is being carried out during their years in the school. One participant said that at his school, the code of conduct is revised every year. This would allow all students to participate in the development of such elements of the code of conduct as have not been predeveloped for them—but it seemed unusual; no one else mentioned this practice.

The process and the actors

The first step in the process leading to the development of a code of conduct involves discussions—among the members of the governing board, among the students and among the staff. The *Education Act* defines the school as a community of learners that takes decisions in consultation with the governing board, so it is important to associate the governing board with each step involved in examining the school's educational project and code of conduct and in making decisions in this regard.

The second step involves agreeing on the competencies to be targeted, establishing positive and negative sanctions to ensure that the code is respected—the focus should be more on education than on punishment—and making sure that the code allows for "active student involvement in the management of the rules and some question-raising concerning the rules themselves." Leblanc stressed that the sanctions should favour the development of the targeted competencies.

The code of conduct is the focus of one of the six sections in Leblanc's resource book, but the other sections are also relevant to this subject. Section 1, on theories concerning citizenship education, shows that the code of conduct and the educational project are at the centre of debates regarding norms and values in society and at school. Section 2 concerns the educational project, Section 4 focuses on student participation, Section 5 examines the governing board and Section 6 suggests references as well as activities to carry out with students.

The resource book costs $11 (including handling charges) and is available, in French only, by e-mail, regular mail, or telephone:

E-mail address:
documentation@csim.qc.ca

Mailing address:
Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal
500, Crémazie est
Montréal H2P 1E7

Telephone:
Irma Pappicio
(514) 384-1830 extension 134

Understanding the mechanism of social exclusion

In observing manifestations of extreme violence—suicide, killing rampages in schools, terrorism and even genocide—Malorie Ménard sees one common element: they are all the end result of social exclusion. How can exclusion be avoided? By understanding how the exclusion process is born and how it develops, beginning with everyday prejudices.

Malorie Ménard works with the Fondation de la tolérance, a non-profit organization dedicated to combating intolerance and discrimination in all its forms, and to promoting such values as respect, tolerance and democracy. Specifically, the group develops and carries out educational activities in schools, youth centres and other organizations. One of these projects is La Caravane de la tolérance.

The Caravane combines an interactive multimedia exhibit with group activities such as role plays, debates and discussions to raise adolescents' awareness about the consequences of prejudice and discrimination. "Prejudice is an idea; discrimination is an act resulting from that idea," Ménard explains. "We all have prejudices; what's important is to be aware of them, and to be aware of the consequences of discrimination."

Ménard began by presenting a film routinely used as part of the Caravane, Balabloc, produced by the NFB, is an ingenious portrayal of how small everyday acts of discrimination can escalate into wide-scale violence. The story begins with a group of animated squares as the main characters; they live peacefully, saying hello whenever they pass each other. One day a circle walks by. The two squares who see him are completely taken aback. They go over and—out of curiosity or malice?—tap the circle on the shoulder. When the circle turns around, however, the squares feign innocence. The circle decides not to do anything and continues walking. The squares go after him, tapping him again. This time the circle falls over, and the squares discover: it bounces! What fun! They begin playing with the circle as a ball. What happens next? A few of the circle's friends arrive. And so the situation begins to escalate…

The film's appeal lies in its portrayal of behaviours and attitudes that can easily be found in everyday society, particularly among young people in high school. Workshop participants identified many familiar situations such as the need to belong to a group, the group effect, the lack of discussion or communication, the verbal violence leading to physical violence, the need to find a scapegoat, as well as typical aggressor and victim behaviours.

The Caravane

The Caravane de la tolérance is designed primarily for Secondary III, IV and V students. The exhibit remains in the school for one to two weeks, while the multicultural, multidisciplinary team of four workshop leaders sees each classroom group twice.

The interactive exhibit uses photos, texts, videos and structured discussions to sensitize students to the process of social exclusion. A first section looks at the origins and nature of prejudice. Photos taken by street kids, illustrating their preoccupations and world views, serve as the basis for discussion.

The second section of the exhibit looks at discrimination and its underlying motives. Eight television sets show scenes of intolerance, each depicting a motive of discrimination listed in the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. Here students examine the consequences of prejudice, the difference between prejudice and discrimination, and the motives behind discriminatory behaviour. They reflect on similar situations in their own environment or taken from the news.

The third section looks at the extreme consequence of discrimination: genocide. The film Balabloc is shown to demonstrate the escalation of violence. Texts and photos present four contemporary genocides—Cambodia, East Timor, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda—and past genocides—Armenia and the Holocaust. "The point is not to be alarmist, but to show that if you transpose the prejudices of an individual to all the members of a society, you then have the ingredients that could lead to drama of enormous proportions—in an extreme case, genocide."

In the classroom, theatre, improvisation, debates and role plays are used to allow young people to confront their own perceptions, demystify prejudices, exercise critical thinking about their preconceived notions, and put more tolerant behaviours into practice. Workshop leaders use real examples taken from the students' own school, so that the notions remain very concrete.

Various issues were raised during the conference workshop—the same issues usually raised in the Caravane. These include young people's strong need to belong to a group, the dangers of groups that form on the basis of excluding others, and group mentality. "When you want to be part of the gang, you don't develop your critical thinking," Ménard pointed out. Workshop participants discussed both aggressor and victim behaviours (dealt with at length in the Caravane, although not using these specific labels), problems resulting from kids not wanting to "squeal," and the need to break the barrier of silence by recognizing the problem of bullying, for example.

"So far, the impact of La Caravane has been very positive," said Ménard. "The students tend to retain the information and reflect on the problems and solutions that have been discussed." The Caravane team later does a follow-up with the school staff.

For more information about La Caravane de la tolérance, contact the Fondation de la tolérance at (514) 847-4848.

Learning a Language

Discovering a New Culture

In the room where the workshop "Learning a language means discovering a new culture" was taking place, the twenty or so participants soon found themselves taking a trip down memory lane. Among them were youngsters attending a French immersion school, secondary school students enrolled in Spanish, teachers of French-language welcoming classes, people of various origins now living in Québec and others who were born here and have chosen, for one reason or another, to learn a second or third language. Participants reflected on the reasons why they opted to learn another language and the circumstances that prompted their decision.

For some, it was a question of necessity: to facilitate integration into the country or community in which they had chosen to live, to improve their employment prospects, or simply because it was required by the school. Others learned a language to prepare for an upcoming trip, to communicate with members of their family or for the sheer pleasure of doing so. For whatever reason, all who made the effort to learn a second or third language now feel they hold a priceless treasure.

"Learning a language enables you to communicate, whether it's just to meet people, or to find help and access services," explains Amanda Mignacca, who attends a French high school, speaks Italian, English and French at home, and can express herself perfectly in all three languages. "Knowing another language is useful in any situation. Here in Montréal, for instance, speaking French simplifies life and enables you to communicate with others," says David Rudin, whose mother tongue is English. He is presently enrolled in a French immersion school.

Knowing a second or third language also introduces you to other realities and opens up a whole new world. One participant who compared language to a landscape made the following observation: "We cannot just look at the scenery—we must become part of it. This enables us to immerse ourselves in a culture and really absorb it." "This way, we get an inside view of that particular culture—through its people, literature, theatre and music and come to realize that we're not so different after all," says Marie Sauvé, an English language arts teacher, presently working in an essentially French-speaking environment at the Ministère de l'Éducation. Marie grew up in an English-speaking community in Montreal, but chose to learn French at a very early age while still in elementary school.

A language can, in effect, bring two cultures together since it enables us to better understand one another and to rise above prejudice. Craig Fenwick, who also grew up in an English-speaking environment, attended a French immersion elementary school before pursuing his studies in English both here and in the United States. "Learning French has been an enriching experience that influenced the way my life has unfolded," he says. It opened doors for him. He now works in Québec in a French-speaking environment and feels perfectly at ease there. And speaking "Molière's language" gave him an opportunity to meet someone who has changed his life—his French-speaking wife.

Knowing why

Many people have discovered why over the years. Oftentimes, students who learn English, French or Spanish do so without realizing its real significance. One participant remembers having enrolled in Spanish because it offered an opportunity to go on a trip to Latin America in Secondary Four! Actually, he will be leaving in a few months. After four years of study, he is really beginning to master the language. While the trip has certainly given special significance to his learning process, only now can he fully appreciate the acquisition of another language. "It's a doorway to culture and to the world," he maintains.

Kristina Candido Koustin grew up in an anglophone family environment. She attends a French immersion elementary school. Her third language is Italian. "I've been able to have French-speaking friends," she says. She is also on a soccer team where the coach and half the players speak French. What she learns in school can be applied every day—in a social or recreational setting.
David has always believed in the merits of learning French and likens it to "having more than one string in his bow." He says that in Montréal, he experiences the benefit of a second language every day. And recently, he went to Paris. "This trip really helped me appreciate what I learned in my immersion program," he says. "I could speak with the people there and could do anything I wanted to—it was fantastic!" You might call it a reward for all his efforts. Because everyone knows that learning a language requires a lot of time, hard work and willpower.

A challenge for the school

Herein lies the school's challenge: to make learning a second or third language a meaningful experience. Because language is first and foremost a discipline, it is often perceived as such by the students—an obligation imposed by the school system. Rarely do students consider why they're learning English or French. They don't always see the benefit.

For this reason, the school must find a way to give meaning to the learning process: to help the students understand why acquiring a second or third language is essential to freedom of movement in our modern-day world. The Québec Education Program provides the necessary tools to this end—specifically by way of its cross-curricular competencies. Languages are indispensable tools whether you are searching for information, exercising critical judgment, making the most of information and communication technologies, shaping your identity, or cooperating and communicating effectively with others. Moreover, these tools are an essential element of every cross-curricular competency. To successfully make this link in the classroom would certainly bring a whole new meaning to the students' learning process—it would not only encourage them to excel and improve their mother tongue, but spark their interest in learning another language.

All the workshop participants, who seek to perfect and increase their second and third language skills, were convinced of this. In any case, David, Kristina, Amanda, Craig and Marie intend to put every effort into maintaining their skills and passing on this heritage to their children!

Living and Building Together *(cont. from page 3)*

mobilizing people to create effective and sometimes innovative conditions conducive to quality education. "And because Montréal is not the Gaspé, and Sept-Îles is not Rouyn-Noranda, each school makes decisions and takes action according to the needs of the community to which it belongs, while remaining open to the world," added Mr. Bisaillon. "Changes in education are introduced and successfully implemented through the daily practices of committed educators."

The Québec Education Program

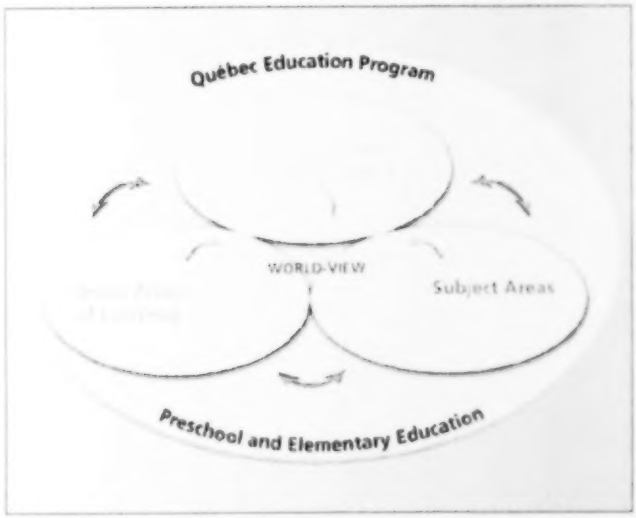
In fact, the Québec Education Program drew a great deal of its inspiration from the successful pedagogical practices already adopted in many schools. Mr. Bisaillon hopes these practices will gradually spread to the entire education system, so that a certain number of promising paths can be set up, to be exploited at all levels of education. "This will help us build bridges between school and life, school and family, school and society, and school and the world," he said. Among other elements, the Québec Education Program's broad areas of learning deal with personal and social questions common to all the subjects and learning cycles. "Whether it be in the context of personal and career planning, environmental awareness and consumer rights and responsibilities, media literacy, health and well-being, or citizenship and community life, learning becomes meaningful because it answers questions that students are asking themselves," Mr. Bisaillon explained. The program also contains cross-curricular competencies that lay the groundwork for the students' ability to continue learning throughout their lives. "These cross-curricular competencies also provide the foundation for becoming an active and responsible citizen."

A collective responsibility

Although citizenship education is a mission that has been taken on by the schools, it is also the responsibility of each and every one of us. Above all, it is the responsibility of the students themselves, particularly those already concerned with this matter. "To all young representatives of elementary and secondary school students here today, I would like to say: society is counting on you. Your participation in the democratic process in your school is essential to helping your community move forward. It is your responsibility to learn to communicate and share your vision, and to channel all the energy of your youth into taking and supporting action that will make your school a place where everyone feels that he or she truly belongs and where everyone learns to live together and to build a world that says no to exclusion, poverty and injustice."

It is also the responsibility of parents, people involved in the school, community organizations and partners of the education community. "I want to remind you that schools cannot progress or change without your support," said Mr. Bisaillon. "Progressing means knowing how to draw on all one's resources, knowing how to make the most of them in order to find the inspiration that is needed—because education must adapt to the changes in the community and society. Your contribution to this effort is therefore invaluable."

The primary challenge facing schools is to become learning organizations where all members agree to question their current practices and perceptions and to work together to find solutions to the problems or difficulties encountered. "Thus, we won't be able to say that the exercise of citizenship is something to be left for later, when students are older, or that is just for the world outside the school," said Mr. Bisaillon. "We will be able to say that, for all those who live together in a school, it's about becoming genuine citizens starting today."



and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities, Media Literacy, and Citizenship and Community Life. They concern problems of relevance to students and raise issues that can broaden their horizons. The focuses of development associated with Citizenship and Community Life—awareness of the importance of rules of social conduct and democratic institutions; involvement in action in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity; and a culture of peace—can be used to get students involved in a project related to citizenship. Indeed, so can the focuses of development of the other broad areas of learning. Teachers should, of course, also take advantage of current events to raise questions.

School staff as models of citizenship

Another link between the QEP and citizenship education is that all school staff, not just social science teachers, are responsible for addressing the broad areas of learning and developing the cross-curricular competencies. Furthermore, this responsibility requires teamwork, which entails putting into practice many of the citizenship competencies discussed above. Thus, since all school staff are involved in citizenship education, the staff as a whole must provide an example.

The paradigm shift this approach involves may be difficult for schools, but it is in the schools that this project has to take form. And by reaching out to their partners—by making the project a collective one—schools can make the project more feasible and reaffirm the principle of linking school learning to real life.

The History, Geography and Citizenship Education Program: Organization, change and diversity

Marius Langlois explained that citizenship education is too broad to be encompassed by a single subject. The History, Geography and Citizenship Education Program represents a change at the elementary level: it combines the theme of society, formerly a focus of the history program, with that of territory, formerly the domain of the geography program. The idea is that to explain a society, one has to take into account its territory and, conversely, that a society influences its territory.

The program considers societies and their territories (primarily Québec, Canada and certain Amerindian societies) from three perspectives: organization, change and diversity. With regard to organization, it asks how a territory is organized, how the organization of a society is influenced by its territory, and what societal needs gave rise to a given form of organization.

Here and elsewhere, present and past

To help students understand organization, change and diversity, the program uses the dichotomies "here and elsewhere" and "present and past." The focus is not on interpretation, which would be expecting too much of elementary school students, but rather on learning to perceive differences in the organization of societies and territories at a given time by comparing "here" and "elsewhere" (diversity), and over time, by comparing "present" and "past" (change). Regarding diversity, for example, the program observes that in the 15th century, when European explorers first encountered Amerindians, some Amerindian societies were nomadic and some were sedentary. Similarly, in the 20th century, some societies were democratic, with charters of rights and responsibilities, and some were not.

The relevance of this approach to citizenship education is twofold. First, it can make students more open. By showing that societies and territories are always changing, that change is constant and normal, it helps students to overcome their tendency to fear or mistrust change and prepares them to accept that it can sometimes be good. Similarly, it makes them more open to diversity by placing them in situations in which there are several points of view and helping them to see that more than one may be valid. Exploring change and diversity encourages tolerance, critical thinking and empathy: students come to realize that "everybody doesn't have to be just like them."

Critical thinking and commitment

Second, the program's approach is designed to create thoughtful, informed citizens by equipping students with a certain method and way of thinking associated with the study of history. They learn to formulate hypotheses and to know how and where to seek information. They share information and ideas and sometimes rethink their positions. They develop their critical faculties, learning to weigh information carefully and to display a healthy scepticism, and finally, they form opinions. Students whose opinions grow out of this process will accept responsibility for their choices and will be able to defend them; in short, they will have the makings of active, involved citizens.

Understanding the organization of a society in its territory also contributes to citizenship education by allowing students to become aware of the importance of rules of conduct and collective interests—of the distribution of rights and responsibilities that makes life in society possible. Finally (as one would expect) the program familiarizes students with the structures and values of democracy and of different political regimes (here and elsewhere, present and past) within the framework of the geographic area and time period it covers.

Looking ahead, Langlois sketched some goals for the secondary-level program: it will focus on the role of human action as a motor of change, both in the past and the present, emphasizing that people have to get involved—make a commitment—if they want change to happen. Students will learn more about the forms and mechanisms of political institutions and the values that underlie democracy. The program may include a competency associated with citizenship education, but that hasn't been officially decided yet.

Schoolscapes is published by the preschool, elementary and secondary education sector.
Robert Bisaillon
Assistant Deputy Minister

Direction des services à la communauté anglophone
Elaine Freeland
Assistant Deputy Minister

Direction de la production en langue anglaise
Liette Michaud-Hedge

With the cooperation of the Direction de la formation générale des jeunes
Margaret Rioux-Dolan
Director

With the cooperation of the Direction des communications
Colombe Cliche
Director
Michel Martel

Editor-in-chief
Jean-Pierre Bernard

Journalists
Eve Krakow, Wendy Mill, Pascale Sauvé, Claudine St-Germain

Editorial Assistant
Denise Thériault

Graphic Design
Les Oranges Bleues

Photographer
Martin Grenier

Distribution
La direction des ressources matérielles
Lise Duchesne

Distribution Code
13-0002-0BA

ISSN 1488-3139 (Printed)
ISSN 1488-3147 (Online)

Éducation Québec